Approved For Release 2002/01/04 : CIA-RDP84-00499R000300040003-7

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Allen Dulles

THE CRAFT OF INTELLIGENCE

A Signet Book

By Arrangement with Harper and Row N.Y.

1963-65

Khrushchev and the U-2 Shootdown 1 May -16 May 1960

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contribution to our national security. In my ten years with the Agency I recall only one case out of many hundreds where a man who had joined the Agency felt some scruples about the activities he was asked to carry on. In this case, he was given the option of either an honorable resignation or a transfer to some other branch of the work.

There was one sensational secret operation, now in the public domain, which did worry some people in this country as being "unlawful," namely the flights of the U-2 airplane. People know a good bit about espionage as it has been carried on from time immemorial. The illegal smuggling of agents with false papers, false identities and false pretenses across the frontiers of other countries is a tactic which the Soviets have employed against us so often that we are used to it. But to send an agent over another country, out of sight and sound, more than ten miles above its soil, with a camera seemed to shock because it was so novel. Yet such are the vagaries of international law that we can do nothing when Soviet ships approach within three miles of our shores and take all the pictures they like, and we could do the same to them if we liked.

If a spy intrudes on your territory, you catch him if you can and punish him according to your laws. That applies without regard to the means of conveyance he has taken to reach his destination—railroad, automobile, balloon or aircraft or, as my forebears used to say, by shanks' mare. Espionage is not tainted with any "legality." If the territory, territorial waters or air space of another country is violated, it is an illegal act. But it is, of course, a bit difficult for a country to deny any complicity when the mode of conveyance is an aircraft of new and highly sophisticated design and performance.

As I said at the outset, some of our fellow citizens don't want anything to do with espionage of any kind. Some prefer the old-fashioned kind, popularized in the spy thrillers. Some would concede that, if you are going to do it at all, it is best to use the system that will produce the best results and is most likely to secure the information we need.

The decision to proceed with the U-2 program was based on considerations deemed in 1955 to be vital to our national security. We required the information necessary to guide our various military programs and particularly our missile program. This we could not do if we had no knowledge of the Soviet missile program. Without a better basis than we then had for gauging the nature and extent of the threat to us from surprise nuclear missile attack, our very survival might be threatened. Self-preservation is an inherent right of sovereignty. Obviously, this is not a principle to be invoked frivolously.

In retrospect, I believe that most thoughtful Americans would have expected this country to act as it did in the situation we faced in the fifties, when the missile race was on in earnest and the U-2 flights were helping to keep us informed of Soviet progress.

And while I am discussing myths and misconceptions, I might tilt at another myth connected with the U-2, namely, that Khrushchev was shocked and surprised at it all. As a matter of fact, he had known for years about the flights, though his information in the early period was not accurate in all respects. Diplomatic notes were exchanged and published well before May 1, 1960, the date of the U-2 failure, when Khrushchev's tracking techniques had become more accurate. Still, since he had been unable to do anything about the U-2, he did not wish to advertise the fact of his impotence to his own people, and he stopped sending protests.

His rage at the Paris Conference was feigned for a purpose. At the time he saw no prospect of success at the conference on the subject of Berlin. He was then in deep trouble with the Chinese Communists. Following his visit to President Eisenhower in the fall of 1959, he had been unable to placate Mao during his stop at Peking en route back from the United States. Furthermore, he was apprehensive that the Soviet people would react too favorably to President Eisenhower's planned trip to the U.S.S.R. in the summer of 1960. Influenced by all these considerations, he decided to use the U-2 as a good excuse for torpedoing both the trip and the conference.

There is evidence of long debate in the Praesidium during the first two weeks of May, after the U-2 fell and before the date of the Paris Conference. The question was, I believe, whether to push the U-2 issue under the rug or use it to destroy the conference. There are also reports that Khrushchev was asked why he had not mentioned the overflight issue when he visited the President in 1959, more than six months before the U-2 came down. He is said to have remarked he didn't wish to "disturb" the spirit of Camp David.

Finally, to conclude the U-2 discussion, I should deal with one other myth, namely, that when Powers was downed on May 1, 1960, everybody should have kept their mouths shut and no admissions of any kind should have been made, the theory being that you don't admit espionage.

It is quite true that there is an old tradition, and one which was excellent in its day and age, that you never talk about any espionage operations and that if a spy is caught, he is supposed to say nothing.

It does not always work out that way in the twentieth century. The U-2 is a case in point. It is, of course, obvious that a large number of people had to know about the building of

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the plane, its real purposes, its accomplishments over the five years of its useful life and also the high authority under which the project had been initiated and carried forward. In view of the unique nature of the project, its cost and complexity, this proliferation of information was inevitable. It could not be handled merely like the dispatch of a secret agent across a frontier. Of course, all these people would have known that any denial by the executive was false. Sooner or later, certainly, this would have leaked out.

But even more serious than this is the question of the responsibility of government. For the executive to have taken the position that a subordinate had exercised authority on his own to mount and carry forward such an enterprise as the U-2 operation without higher sanction would have been tantamount to admission of irresponsibility in government and that the executive was not in control of actions by subordinates which could vitally affect our national policy. This would have been an intolerable position to take. Silence on the whole affair, which I do not believe could have been maintained, would have amounted to such an admission. The fact that both in the U-2 matter and in the Bay of Pigs affair the Chief Executive assumed responsibility for what was planned as a covert operation, but had been uncovered, was, I believe, both the right decision to take and the only decision that in the circumstances could have been justified. Of course, any subordinate of the executive, such as the Director of Central Intelligence, would have been ready to assume all or any responsibility in either of these affairs—even the responsibility of admitting irresponsibility if called upon to do so. In theory, this may have appealed to some. In actual practice, I believe it was quite unrealistic.

Today in the field of intelligence, many admissions are made, either tacitly or by deeds and actions, as well as in words. When the Soviet Union agreed to exchange Francis Powers for their spy, Colonel Rudolf Abel, they were admitting what he was and who he was, just as clearly as if they had published the facts in the newspaper.

Intelligence has come a long way since the good old days when everything could be shoved under the rug of silence.

CIA, the bad boy of government

There are other kinds of myths, more of the spiteful or backbiting sort, that one sometimes hears in more restricted and "knowing" circles. I doubt if many readers outside Washington have ever even encountered them, and so I will deal with them only in passing. They have to do primarily with CIA's relations with other parts of our government, especially

those with whom it works most closely. First of all, it is in the nature of people and institutions that any "upstart" is going to be somewhat frowned upon and its intrusions resented at first by the more well-established and traditional organizations. CIA had to prove itself and gain the respect of its elders by showing what it could do and by submitting its employees and its work to the test of time. It has, in my opinion, withstood this test and earned the respect of its fellows in government. It has, at the same time, not swallowed up the personnel, the property or the functions of any other agency, despite its reputed size and its reputed budget. The statement that there are American embassies where the CIA personnel outnumber the Foreign Service personnel is a rather typical troublemaking bit of malice, as is the one that the CIA personnel in embassies can do what they please. The Soviets, it is true, have many embassies where the intelligence personnel outnumber the diplomats, but we do not. The Soviet ambassador is himself sometimes an officer of the KGB. I have yet to hear of a case where the American ambassador was a CIA man.

The American ambassador is the commanding officer of all American officials in the country to which he is assigned, including any CIA personnel. This is subject, however, to the overriding authority of the President and the Secretary of State, who are responsible for the conduct of our foreign relations and decide how our policy should be carried out. It is they, of course, who instruct the ambassadors and determine the roles and mission of the various segments of our overseas missions, which often include AID, USIA, military, intelligence and other official personnel. There have been times when, under instructions of the State Department, the CIA has carried on certain operations which were not disclosed to the ambassador in the country in which the operations may have originated. This is the exception rather than the rule and generally happens only in a situation where an intelligence operation may be in part based in country A but more directly affects the situation in country B.

The CIA and the FBI are at loggerheads

This is one of the favorite myths. Nothing is more newsworthy than an internecine war between government agencies, and the press likes to tell us that these two organizations—the FBI working in the domestic field and the CIA in the foreign field—are literally knifing each other. As a matter of fact, one of the most satisfactory features of my work as Director of Central Intelligence was the close relationship established with Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, particularly in the field of counter-

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